

This might come off as a really inconsequential answer, but I want to work with middle school students because I feel more comfortable around them; I know the content better, I feel more comfortable in my authority over them, and I think I can relate to them more easily than I can a high school student. These are my top three answers. There are plenty more, but I won't bore you with the details.

I absolutely have no clue if middle school will be the right fit for me. I *do* know that I'm tired of learning a teaching technique and hearing my professor say, "But of course you'll want to adjust accordingly for middle school students." What does that even mean? Every student learns differently, I know that, but I feel like children make leaps and bounds *intellectually* every year. Not just the first five years of life but every year of life. I don't want to know the differences between teaching high school versus middle school but the difference between sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. I'm done writing lessons for students whose learning capabilities I'm not aware of.

As a student myself in middle school, I'll always remember the almost sickly sweet drama, an omnipresence in the hallways; everyday was a new midlife crisis and every crisis ten times worse than the previous one. We're not kids, and we're too cool to be adults, but not cool enough to drive or go to the mall alone or skip school. We're too cool for school, but not cool enough to escape in school suspension or getting grounded for a week and losing our cell phone.

Another big reason for moving to middle is that I still feel too young to treat high school students like students. To me, they really do seem like tiny adults, and I want to joke with them, and encourage them to experiment and make mistakes; not good mindset to have when you are responsible for someone else's children. I can, without a doubt, look at a middle school student and say, "You are way too young to be doing that," but I don't think I could necessarily say that to

every high school student. I know that when I get a little older, my feelings will probably change, and so in order to provide the best example and advice I can for my students, I think I need to wait a little longer because after all, I'm still a student myself. One casual remark can stay with a student for their whole life. I can think of a teacher or two in my own high school days that at the time seemed really cool, but looking back now, I think of how they set horrible examples of how safe and healthy individuals should function socially and professionally.

I believe that every teacher is initially formed by their own experiences in school. All of our experiences are different, and no one person's is better than the others'. I will take positive and negative experiences from my childhood and incorporate them into my own teaching style. Although we (as teachers) try to teach in a way that's appealing to a variety of learning styles and personalities, it's almost inevitable that a person's 'real life' character will show through. I think that I approach life in a way that students will respond to: I'm enthusiastic, patient yet demanding, sincere, realistic, trustworthy, and understanding. I'm prepared to tread the fine line between friend and teacher. I got this.

I'm ready to jump into this and just figure it out. I'm obviously nervous because I have no experience being in a classroom with middle school students, but I am excited-nervous. I'm becoming more confident in my abilities regarding content, planning, and theory. I'm definitely ready for the next chapter of my education, and I'm hoping that this class will provide a catalyst for my passion for teaching.